

STAFF REPORT

September 21, 2012

Proposal:

The Scottish Rite Temple requests a certificate of appropriateness for modifications to the historic Temple building at 332 Centennial Mall South.

Discussion:



Photo 1976, D. Murphy, Nebr. State Historical Society

The Scottish Rite Temple was built in 1916-17, designed by Ellery L. Davis near the close of his partnership with George Berlinghof. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986 and is identified in the Capitol Environs Design Standards as a significant historic asset of the District. A low brick



wing extends east from the main building, with bricked-in windows.

The current proposal would modify the east wing with an upper story, corner entrance feature, and refacing in limestone.



The addition faces L Street rather than Centennial Mall. A relevant design standard states:

Design Standard 9: Facades

New buildings in the District should be designed to enhance the setting of the Capitol and their immediate surroundings. When those surroundings have a high degree of cohesiveness, new designs should be compatible with their setting, strengthening the visual relationships found among existing buildings and landscape features. In areas that lack cohesion, designs should be proposed that offer themes and patterns that can be further expanded in future development. Brick, stone, or other richly textured, highly durable masonry is desirable for building exteriors on Capitol Square, Centennial Mall, and Lincoln Mall. Permanence should be an overriding characteristic in the choice of exterior materials. Colors should be drawn from a muted palette of warm, earth tones or shades of white, with the context of surrounding buildings as a guide.

The proposal appears to respect the historic structure, enhance a modest “basement” wing, and create a clearer entrance feature addressing the property’s east parking lot. The wing adopts elements of the historic structure but omits the cornice and parapet, which maintains the wing as a subordinate feature, rather than competing with the main building.

Recommended finding: The proposed east addition to Scottish Rite Temple meets the Capitol Environs Design Standards and enhances a fine historic building.

Recommended action: Approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

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